REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 5 are independent claims. Claims 2-4 and 6-8 are dependent claims.

Claims 1-8 have been rejected. Amendments to claims 1-8 are presented herein. Claims 9-12 are newly added in this response. The specification has been amended to improve form. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Changes To The Specification

Changes have been made to the specification only to place it in preferred and better U.S. form for issuance. No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 101

In items 3 and 4 on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to nonstatutory subject matter. Applicants submit that the claims, as amended, meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 101. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under § 101.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In items 5 and 6 on page 2-4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hennessey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,483,938). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons presented below.

Claim 1 recites, as amended, "... extracting certain questions from the plurality of questions using an algorithm based on the correlation levels; displaying the certain questions to a user; receiving answers from the user corresponding respectively to the certain questions; and extracting causes with high correlation levels from the plurality of causes based on the answers from the user." Independent claim 5 recites language similar to that of claim 1.

The Hennessey reference relates to generating and managing a knowledge database used in identifying anomalies in an object using image processing. In Hennessey, an image of

the product having an anomaly is captured, and the image is converted into a pixel-based digital image. The digital image is then decomposed into a basic-element-based or primitives-based representation of the image, and the anomaly is isolated on the decomposed image. The anomaly is compared with stored decomposed images of known anomalies in the knowledge database to find a stored decomposed image having a maximum similarity. A label associated with the stored decomposed image having the maximum similarity is presented to an operator, and the operator then enters the label into the knowledge database to be associated with the decomposed image (Hennessey at col. 2, lines 9-14).

The Examiner has asserted that the "questions" of the present invention read on the "anomalies" or "defects" of Hennessey. Thus, the Examiner has implied that the "causes" of the present invention are associated with the "defects" of Hennessey and read on the "labels" (names or classifications identifying the "defects") of Hennessey. However, Hennessey merely discloses comparing data stored in the knowledge database with the captured image data, and using an algorithm to extract data that are most similar to the captured image data from the knowledge database. Thus, Hennessey does not disclose "displaying the certain questions to the user; receiving answers from the user corresponding respectively to the certain questions; and extracting causes with high correlation levels from the plurality of causes based on the answers from the user," as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, it is submitted that independent claims 1 and 5 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

The dependent claims depend respectively from claims 1 and 5 and include all the limitations of claim 1 plus additional limitations that are not taught or suggested by the prior art. For example, claim 4 recites "assigning a weight to each of the answers." As discussed above, Hennessey does not disclose obtaining "answers" from the user. Thus, Hennessey does not disclose "assigning a weight to each of the answers," as recited in claim 4. Therefore, for at least this reason and the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 5, it is submitted that dependent claims 2-4 and 6-8 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 1-8 patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under § 102.

New Claims

Claims 9-12 are newly added with this response to alternatively define the present invention. Independent claim 9 recites " ... a first control unit extracting certain questions from the plurality of questions using an algorithm based on the correlation levels, displaying the certain questions to be answered by a user on the display, and receiving answers from the user via the network, the answers corresponding respectively to the certain questions and being input by the user using the input device; and a second control unit extracting causes with high correlation levels from the plurality of causes based on the answers from the user." These features are not taught or suggested by the cited reference.

Claims 10-12 depend directly or indirectly from claim 9 and should be allowable for the reasons described above.

Thus, for at least the reasons presented above, Applicants submit claims 9-12 patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the new claims.

Conclusion

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding rejections, the application is submitted to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Finally, if there are any additional fees associated with filing of this response, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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